

Message Text

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R 111618Z DE C77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9176
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 20353

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: FANFANI SOFTENS ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMUNISTS

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A PRIVATE MEETING WITH SENATE PRESIDENT FANFANI ON DEC. 6, I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRESS OUR CONCERN OVER THE EVIDENT DRIFT IN THE ITALIAN SITUATION WHICH FAVORS THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE PCI TOWARD ITS GOAL OF FULL PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT. IN PARTICULAR, I CITED LAST WEEK'S 6-PARTY RESOLUTION OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES WHICH, IN EFFECT, BROADENS THE PROGRAM ACCORD TO THE HITHERTO SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED AREA OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. I ALSO RAISED REPORTS THAT THE DC IN SICILY HAD AGREED TO INVITE THE COMMUNISTS TO FORM PART OF THE GOVERNING MAJORITY (ALBEIT NOT PART OF THE GOVERNING COALITION) IN THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

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2. FANFANI AGREED WITH ME THAT THE OVERALL SITUATION WAS SERIOUS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO PROBLEMS OF THE ECONOMY AND PUBLIC ORDER. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE DID NOT CONSIDER THE SITUATION UNDULY ALARMING OR DESPERATE, AND IN FACT TENDED TO DOWNPLAY THE POLITICAL DANGERS OF THE MOMENT. SIGNIFICANTLY,

FANFANI SIAD THAT IN THE PRESENT DELICATE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL FOR THE DC IF THE US TOOK A HARDER ANTI-COMMUNIST LINE IN ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HE ALSO SOUGHT TO REASSURE ME THAT THE SICILIAN DC INITIATIVE TO BRING THE COMMUNISTS INTO THE GOVERNING MAJORITY IN THE REGION HAD BEEN FIRMLY TURNED OFF.

3. AS TO THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, FANFANI SEEMS TO ACCEPT THE VIEW THAT AT SOME POINT THE DC WOULD HAVE TO MEET PCI (AS WELL AS PSI AND PRI) DEMANDS IN SOME FASHION FOR A CHANGE IN THE ANDREOTTI MINORITY GOVERNMENT FORMULA. WITHOUT ENDORSING OR REJECTING IT, FANFANI SAID THAT ONE FORMULA CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED WAS THAT OF A NEW CENTER-LEFT COALITION (DC, PSI AND PRESUMABLY PRI AND PSDI) WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE GOVERNING MAJORITY. HOWEVER, HE ASSURED ME THAT NOTHING OF THIS SORT HAD YET BEEN "DECIDED." COMMENT: PSI LEADER MANCINI RECENTLY AIRED SUCH A PROPOSAL, WHICH WOULD AT LEAST THEORETICALLY OVERCOME SOCIALIST OBJECTIONS TO ENTERING ANY NEW ALLIANCE WITH THE DC THAT EXCLUDES THE PCI.

4. COMMENT. IN CONTRAST TO FANFANI'S USUALLY PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENTS AND WELL-KNOWN STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST LINE, I WAS PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY THE MARKED SOFTENING IN FANFANI'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PCI AND HIS COUNSELING AGAINST TOO STRONG A USG
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PUBLIC POSTURE TOWARD THE COMMUNIST PROBLEMS IN ITALY. HIS APPARENT FASCINATION WITH A NEW CENTER-LEFT FORMULA WHICH WOULD BRING THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNING MAJORITY IS INTERESTING IN THE LIGHT OF HIS PATERNAL ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT THE STEP-BY-STEP ENTRY OF THE SOCIALISTS INTO THE CENTER-LEFT OF THE EARLY SIXTIES. AT LEAST IN PART, FANFANI'S MORE "POSSIBILIST" ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI MAY BE EXPLAINED BY HIS WELL-KNOWN PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS AND BELIEF THAT HE, AS THE LEADER OF THE DC'S CENTER-RIGHT, REPRESENTS THE PCI'S MOST VALID INTERLOCUTOR. FANFANI SEEMS TO HAVE SET THE STAGE FOR A SHIFT TO THE LEFT IN A RECENT SPEECH IN MILAN. ON THAT OCCASION, FANFANI RECALLED POPE JOHN TELLING HIM: " IF SOMEONE ACCOMPANIES YOU ON A ROAD YOU CONSIDER CORRECT, DON'T ASK WHERE HE CAME FROM, BUT WHERE HE IS GOING. AND IF HE IS GOING WHERE YOU WANT TO GO, LET HIM ACCOMPANY YOU." GARDNER

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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